California Garden

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G I Haircut . . . . .

By Roland S. Hoyt, *Landscape Architect*

Joe the tree butcher has gone to the wars. In fact he went some time past and it is only now that his absence is becoming apparent in dilapidated and outgrowing shrubberies over the country. Joe is the chap who had cut the back or posterior end out of his transportation and went around with a various assortment of tools and furbelows suited to season and job in the garden. For a wage, with pruning hook and saw he would attempt anything—anything, and he only remotely suspected that more often than not he was merely making up your own deficiencies in plant selection.

Joe was only of general intelligence, but stout of heart and arm. He could hold a forty foot tree under your window well in line and that's comparable to the job he's doing now . . . only those who have tried it will understand. That's where the haircut comes in. How often we saw these domes and boxes, plants sheared and cut and saddened, held cramped and abused, battered willy-nilly into place; now happily bursting their leafy corsage. These shrubs and trees are setting out to do things that nature built them for and we might just as well accept certain facts because there is no time to walk around them and God is in his heaven watching you.

It may very well be that you have something Joe didn't have. It is to that something that the following is directed. Let's forget for the time being all the errors in original selection of a shrub and its cultural management that make a great deal of this pruning necessary and look at the problem as it is today.

One of the first and the most intelligent thing to do is to know the plants natural habit of growth or find out. In the back of your thinking and acting this prevalent method of development should be fostered, preserved, accented. If this isn't done some weird, fantastic and unnatural effect as noted above will result. If conditions or location does not favor or permit this natural correction, consider taking the plant out and replacing it with one that fits the required function better . . . there is a plant for every conceivable reasonable demand in the landscape.

No one is afraid to cut out dead wood and that is one of the first operations in the interest of opening up the body of the plant to light and air. Make these larger cuts close up to the supporting stem, but not so near as to disturb the little greenwood roll or collar that is normally found there. Time was when you had to use a sharp knife for a clean cut. Now, it is claimed, a little bruising or mashing of the cellular tissue releases activating hormones or enzymes to hurry the healing process.

One old principle that is important and little understood may produce reverse effects as desired now. That is the matter of the revigoration of growth caused by cutting out live wood. The more wood taken from the plant the more growth is encouraged, the more that has to be removed, until the deadly ring approaches the present serious proportion not warranted by todays labor market. The rule is this: cut into vigorous plants lightly to discourage maximum growth and prune weak-growing plants excessively to encourage a maximum growth. And here again, ask yourself . . . have I the best plant for this spot . . . am I going to be eternally cutting and whacking, spending time and energy and money where the right plant would demand none of these? Too often, pruning considerations are found to relate back to faulty thinking in the original layout. Our boy Joe is now making his cuts at the neck-line. Many a good gardener might well lower his own well-earned halo eight inches and provide it with a puckering string as a reminder against the next time he plants.

A deciduous tree is one that drops all its leaves in autumn. One reason they are used in subtropical regions is to provide summer shade for a spot where the warmth of the sun is desirable in winter . . . another is timely seasonal change and indication, together with the alchemy that bursting buds and tinted leaves offer an evergreen garden. The pruning of such a tree involves the maintenance largely of the peculiar form or method of branching inherent in the species. The pattern of the bare branches may be attractive offseason or it may be a hideous burlesque on the witches broom, the result of an ultimate lopping of the limbs to save the tree in the wind. The play of light and shadow on a wall or patio floor is an intimate and stirring texture in movement which depends on an intelligent opening of a tree. The theory of pruning here will take into account divergent branches that tend to confuse the line pattern, those that tend to

(Continued on page 6)

Meetings of Floral Association

By Myrtle L. Carse

Our President, Mrs. Mary A. Greer, presided at all three Meetings. For the August Meeting, Mrs. Greer arranged a Round Table, with Mrs. Herbert L. Jenkins, Mrs. Harlie H. Brown, Mrs. John G. Clark and Mr. C. I. Jerabek leading the discussions. Mrs. Jenkins, who has been experimenting with herbs, prefaced her talk with the remark that even an old shoe could be made palatable if properly cooked and seasoned. Potted plants from her garden—thyme, sage, marjoram, borage, etc., were identified and the use of the little blue borage flowers illustrated by floating them in a shallow glass bowl. After the meeting, Mrs. Jenkins shared the plants with those wishing to try the culinary entities suggested by Mrs. Brown, who followed with "Herbs in Cooking," stressing such combinations as tomatoes and basil, veal or chicken with marjoram, and other natural affinities of meats, vegetables and herbs. Mrs. Clark brought scented geraniums and recalled the jellies our grandmothers used to make with the rose geranium leaves placed in the bottom of the glass for additional flavor. Mr. C. I. Jerabek, upon whom we depend for new and unusual introductions, furnished speciments from the Balboa Park Nursery, discussing the cultural aspects of each, and passed them around for closer inspection.

At the September Meeting, Mr. Charles Harbinson brought a collection of plants from "South of the Border" and took us, pictorially speaking, on down into Mexico, continuing the journey we started in July. Palm Oases, Old Missions, colorful markets and native scenes combined to make the trip very enjoyable.

For variety, Mrs. Greer decided to feature Begonias at the October Meeting, and chose Mrs. John G. Clark, Founder and First President of the Alfred D. Robinson Branch of the American Begonia Society, as Guest Speaker. Mrs. Clark says she gained her initial knowledge of Begonias by camping on Mr. Robinson's doorstep and asking all sorts of questions. Her begonia-bordered patio furnished enough cuttings, leaves and flowers of Rex, Tuberous, Fibrous, etc., to cover a long table. Some of those named and described follows: Ricinifolia, leaves resemble those of the Castor Bean, hence the name, stands the hottest sun and sends up tall stocks of lacy flowers. Calolinaefolia—large clusters of leaves, thick-stemmed and procumbent, in direct contrast to Foliosa—tiniest leaved one, very fern-like foliage with small white flowers; Sunderbruckii—starlike leaf having light green streak down each vein and so many variations it cannot always be identified; Luxurians—one of the parents of Mrs. Scripps, small tuft in center of leaf cluster, white bloom; Lord Palmerston—(Rex) good for arrangements; Gilsoni—shy bloomer with double flowers; Bertha Von Lothringen, one of the finest winter bloomers. Mrs. Clark told us some Begonias imitate other plants. Frutescans, for example—very ivy-like, and Compta—feather-like in appearance. "The Manicatas," she said, "must not get too wet in winter." Abel Carriere—silver purplish, one of the oldest hybrids; small leaved Alba Picta—as opposed to Picta Alba—a tuberous—Argentea Guttata—white flower, spotted type. Mrs. Robinson's hybrid, about to be named Di-Shasta, flowers almost orange, leaves retain spots. Richard Robinson—named for Alfred D. Robinson's father, very delicate, needs lots of heat. Nelly Bly, Richardsoni, Calla Lily, and many others. She mentioned the fact that Nelly Bly, a hybrid of Eva Kenworthey Gray of Encanto, was reported as having been seen in a window in England by an American soldier.

Mrs. Clark snips cuttings from her plants to share with her friends with the abandon of one who removes faded leaves, and they seem to respond with well rounded contours and abundant flowers as if to make recompense for her generosity.

Mrs. Greer regretted we could not have a Chrysanthemum Show this year, but announced plans for a Chrysanthemum Meeting in November.

There was a shortage of tuberous begonias last season. Better get your orders in now.

A New Eugenia

Now and then as the horticultural calendar ticks off the days, something new in the way of plants, that is really valuable, turns up. Such may be this new Eugenia found and preserved by Pasquale Antonicelli of the Washington Street Nurseries in San Diego. In 1939, Anton (K. O. Session's Toni, to differentiate) noticed one seedling among several thous- that exhibited marked variance in form and size . . . so much so that he isolated and grew it apart from the others.

This original plant is now some three or four feet high, showing a much reduced rate of growth compared with the type and coming to a distinct point. It is done without shearing, the leaves only about one-third size, quite acuminate and much narrowed at the base, dark bronzy-green, the new growth coppery red. The young plants have a wide, squat appearance and apparently elongate without a corresponding development of the stiff lateral branches which attach at a right angle.

The significance of this find is indicated in the vast use of Eugenia for hedges, with the several times yearly shearings to keep in shape. Used as a hedge or formally as a landscape material, the upkeep of this plant should be only nominal while the unique texture would be outstanding nearing that of boxwood, with the same slow, consolidating growth and with much the same uses.

Mr. Antonicelli has not applied for a plant patent, preferring rather, to see it go into a freer dissemination. Roy Wilcox & Co. of Montebello has obtained stock plants, as has the Johnson Nurseries of La Mesa. Evans & Reeves of Los Angeles is to have it.

It may be observed that the originator thinks the batch of seed was from *Eugenia myrtifolia,* but a casual observation shows more the characteristic carried over from *E. hookeri* (paniculata). Since the original specimen has not flowered, no final determination can be made. It is not probable, but possible that ultimately it might fall into the variety australis of *Eugenia paniculata.* Should it prove to be a horticultural variety of whatever species or even a hybrid, it might carry the name Antonicelli.

California Garden Editors

ASSOCIATE EDITOR, ALICE CLARK

At the end of his first ten years as editor of the California Garden, Mr. Robinson remarked, in looking over the back numbers:

"I say that I linger among the old pages. I commend such ramblings to those who have the old volumns. You will find much good for the garden, some for the soul and, if you are an old subscriber, a source of pride that you helped to make it."

After following the above advice through thirty-five instead of ten volumns, it seems as though the best investment I ever made was expended in trying to get a complete set of this oldest western garden magazine. Thanks to Mrs. Greer for calling attention to the bargain!

As a result of digging in this fertile soil, household chores have gone begging. If it had not been for the heaviest rain since 1850, thus early, even the garden would have been neglected. The explicit and thorough delineation of every phase of gardening in California by all the well-known authorities of this and yesteryear was overwhelming. I wondered how such a pace could be kept up.

Then things commenced to happen deep down inside me. I began to know why President Greer refused to let the California Garden fail to unfold new leaves each year. It is a living organism with deep roots, started to help give to San Diego gardens that would be a credit to the setting and climate of the city. Since the horizons of beauty are unlimited, that aim is still our goal. We must go on true missionary zeal. We have a host of potential friends on our doorstep. The sensitive and discerning ones will want to stay and some way we must reach them. That is why I feel sure you are bearing with us when our issues are late and far between, in these difficult days, while we feel for firmer ground and await the time when our editors can give us freely of their talent again.

You probably realize that our magazine has been through the war before. It was heartening to read of the faithful few who sent flowers to Camp Kearny in 1917, tied in overflowing packages to the running board of what seems, to our present machine-age eyes, a very funny automobile. This effort is being duplicated today, on a larger scale, in hospital camps, at the Army and Navy "Y," and in helping to plant the service camps.

We came upon this editorial—you will probably recognize the Robinson touch—in the 1918 California Garden for December, mailed in February. (The January number came out in March, with "Suggestions for April!" How wonderful, the saving grace of humor.) There was no mention of the personal loss the Editor had suffered at that time, but, among other things, these words:

"We have been very much disorganized and the magazine, always somewhat erratic, has threatened to settle down and stop on more than one occasion. Lots of publications did this with a sigh of thankfulness, but it appears even that much relief is denied the California Garden. We cannot get peeved and quit when all the subscribers patiently and smilingly await the next issue and keep on doing it long after patience has ceased to be a virtue and a smile becomes heroism."

Who could desert a talented editor like that? He must have asked and received all the gifts of the gods at the birth of his garden magazine, because we still roll on under the momentum of that wonderful start and careful up-bringing through our youth.

If the publication was delayed and shortened during the last war it is understandable that it should be even more so in this. The smile has become that of "stoicism." But we do expect to come through with flying colors and still give the garden public what they are waiting for.

Incidentally, if you feel too sad about red points, blue points and gas coupons, consider that we do have plenty of wheat. In World War I, our magazine was full of potato recipes as substitutes for flour and the sugar shortage was also acute. In those days the automobile was not quite so omnipresent, so street cars were a matter of course, but we do admit that there was more breathing space on them then and more elbow room on the down-town thorofares. Perhaps the crowd is our newest blessing in disguise and will do away with future debates on geraniums versus smokestackes. The more smokestacks, the more people; the more people, the more geraniums; the more need for California Garden!

Just a little more, anent Editors. When, after ten straight years of editing, Mr. Robinson decided the mantle should drape other shoulders, G. R. Gorton, of the Department of Agriculture, fitted it for three years until it went back to A. D. R. for another three. A prominent banker, Mr. Blochman, occupied the editorial sanctum for the next year, to be relieved by another Agriculture expert, R. R. McLean. He had to leave in 1929 to supervise the control of the Mediterranean fruit fly. Mr. Robinson again took over until January, 1930, when he penned his last editorial, though he continued to contribute to the magazine.

He was succeeded by another Department of Agriculture man (what garden editors they are!) Silas Osborne, who turned out a fine magazine for the next seven years and in addition was our mentor on roses, pelargonium and plant pests. He changed the form to a larger size, with photographs on the cover. Landscapist John Wimmer took care of us for a short period in 1937, followed by a professional editor, Thomas Mc Mullen.

We were next guided by Roland Hoyt, landscape architect and author of "Ornamental Plants for Sub-Tropical Regions," who gives a fine literary flavor to gardening.

After five years, his services were required for war camps and the reins came back to the willing, though overworked hands, of Silas Osborne. In point of time he has served us longest, next to Mr. Robinson, with freshness of outlook and interest that has been most stimulating. I am moved to express our thankfulness in this November season for such a long line of able editors and trust that our appreciation will bring a little glow of pleasure in the toes of their Christmas stockings.

Choosing Your Fertilizers

By D. B. Hopkins, *Gardening Illustrated*

[Editor's Note: This article from the September, 1944 number of Gardening Illustrated, published in London, will interest the American garden public not only for its comments on fertilizers, including some not commonly used here, but also for the significance of its omissions, namely, the animal manures, which we are still fortunate to have in limited quantities.]

One of the most frequent mistakes with fertilizers is using the wrong type for particular crops. The results are poor. The gardener blames not himself, but fertilizers in general, and generally speaking, the following season his soil receives no fertilizers at all. There are a large number of different fertilizer materials available, but each of them offers different virtues.

Nothing helps the inexpert less than an encyclopoedic list of crops in one column and suitable fertilizers in another. It is much better to understand the principles of fertilizer science upon which choice must be based; especially in wartime when a particular fertilizer required may be unobtainable at the right time and when an alternative has to be decided upon. Principles are simple and memorable—details are so easily confused.

Fertilizers are substances that supply the soil with reasonable amounts of one, two, or all of the following: nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium. The amounts of the latter are expressed in the analysis of fertilizers as equivalent percentages of phosphoric acid and of potash. First, then, what are the special functions of these three essential plant-foods?

Nitrogen is the food for building leaf and stem. Phosphoric acid is the food for root development, for seedling development, and for encouraging plant maturity. Potash is the food for the building-up of carbohydrates in the plant, e. g., starch in potatoes, sugar in tomatoes, etc.; and also is the food that seems to count most in the maintenance of healthy vigour and disease resistance.

If these things are remembered, and if the plant-food contents of various fertilizers are studied (as expressed in their analyses), a little exercising of commonsense will decide which types of fertilizers best suit particular crops.

If you want plenty of fast-growing leaf a good nitrogen-supplier is indicated. A crop grown for leaf production such as lettuce, cabbage, spinach, and so on, will clearly thrive very well on a predominant supply of nitrogen. Some phosphate fertilizer early on to encourage root development so that there is an extensive root system by which the nitrogen can be absorbed; some potash to keep the plant vigorous and healthy; but above all—nitrogen for the growth of leaf and stem. It would definitely *not* be good to give such crops a top-dressing during later growth of a purely phosphatic fertilizer such as superphosphate—for this would tend to encourage maturity, and nobody wants maturity in lettuce or cabbages except the seedraiser.

Do you want root development? Well, of course, all plants must get a good root system thriving as quickly as possible so that the *early* presence of phosphatic food in the soil is invariably essential. But crops that are root types themselves obviously will do better if phosphatic fertilizers are present very plentiful. Also, since many of these root crops are at the same time building up starch and sugar, potash is also demanded as abundantly as possible. How does nitrogen stand for these crops? Well, leaf-growth is vital since the carbohydrates are built up by the leaf, breathing in carbon dioxide and retaining the carbon; but on the whole an adequate, rather than an excessive, leaf development is required. Too much nitrogen will make the tops of these root plants develop rather at the expense of the under-soil part of the plant. So it would be dangerous to supply a nitrogenous fertilizer *only,* as this would lead to an unbalanced supply of food for the plant which would tend to produce an unbalanced plant. Potatoes that are grown in soil that is over-nitrogenous and potash-deficient are poor-keeping and turn black or grey on boiling. Tomato plants under similar conditions will be far too leafy, over-brimming with soft unfruitful growth; and the stages of fruit formation and ripening will be delayed perhaps so long delayed that chutney and not salads will receive the whole crop.

So much for a brief look at general principles. Now what about the fertilizers? These can be divided into several classes. (1) Straight inorganic or mineral fertilizers — "straight" meaning that they supply one, or mainly one, plant-food only. (2) Straight organic fertilizers. (3) Compound fertilizers which are mixtures designed to supply balanced amounts of all the plant-foods. Each of these can, to some extent, be further classified as quick-acting types and slow-acting types.

The amateur is mainly confused over the straight fertilizers. After all, if he uses a compound, he has little to worry about for his plant-food budget has been carefully balanced already for him by the manufacturer. So it is the straight fertilizers we must deal with in most detail.

First, the nitrogen suppliers. The three main inorganic ones are Sulphate of Ammonia (20.6 per cent), Nitrate of Soda (16 per cent), and Nitro-Chalk (15.5 per cent). All these are rapidly soluable and therefore quick in action. But plants can only absorb nitrate-nitrogen so the ammonia in Sulphate of Ammonia has first to be bacterially converted into a nitrate form. This will happen, but it means that the nitrate fertilizers (and Nitro-Chalk is one) will be quicker still. In the winter, the bacterial change will take place slowly because the micro-organisms don't like cold—so a top-dressing for cabbage, for example, in a cold early spring is better in a nitrate form. Nitro-Chalk has a useful content of calcium carbonate so it helps the lime budget a little as well. These fertilizers should be used moderately and frequently rather than in big doses as they are all very powerful—one ounce per square yard or less is the best rule.

Continuing with nitrogen, the organics mainly in use are Dried Blood (13 to 15 per cent), Hoof and Horn (14 to 16 per cent). There is nothing inherently valuable in the fact that these materials are derived from one-time living matter. Their nitrogen has to be turned into just the same nitrate-form as the nitrogen in Sulphate

of Ammonia. Where the organics are valuable is that they are less soluable and therefore slower and longer-lasting. It takes much longer for the soil bacteria to turn them into nitrate types. Personally—and this question is a highly controversial one—I think the organics are best used on permanent plants, such as fruit bushes, fruit trees, where a nitrogen supply of rather steadier duration will be of more value. For once nitrogen has reached this "edible" nitrate-form, it is either used by the plant or washed out of reach by rain—so the burst of nitrate food supplied by an inorganic will tend to have an intense but short-term effect; whereas the organic, slowly turning into nitrate, its *various* nitrogen compounds doing so at differing rates, will provide a steadier though never so abundant supply. Also, organics can be used very safely in large quantities as, being less soluble, they do not make the soil solution too concentrated. This I think, is why many gardeners will pay more for rather less nitrogen in organic form than in inorganic form. As a subsidiary point, the organics, being slower, should be applied rather earlier than the inorganics.

Next, the phosphoric acid suppliers. The two main mineral or inorganic ones are Superphosphate (18 per cent or 17 per cent) and Basic Slug (variable, 9 to 18 per cent), and they are very different. Superphosphate is a soluable form of phos, acid and it is therefore quick-acting; Basic Slag is less soluable, but it has also a very useful lime content. Superphosphate should, therefore, be applied in the spring and summer for assisting early growth, development of roots, etc., and Basic Slag should be applied in autumn or winter for building up a good general content of phosphatic plant food in the soil. The slow but lasting results of Basic Slag have been proved over and over again, especially for grassland and long-term crops.

Again, moderate applications of one ounce per square yard or less should be the rule.

The organic phosphate fertilizers mainly used are Bone Meal and Steamed Bone Flour. These also contain a little organic nitrogen, though the amount in the latter is almost negligible. It is best to regard them as phosphatic fertilizers predominantly. Both provide only soluable and slow-acting phosphoric acid, Bone Meal about 20 to 24 per cent and the Flour about 27.5 per cent. The more finely-divided they are, the less slow they are, as they will expose more surface to the soil actions which gradually dissolve their plant-food contents. As with the organic nitrogen types, it is probable that for long-term effects their lasting qualities and the fact that excesses can be applied without danger have made them popular. Personally, I would always prefer Steamed Bone Flour to Bone Meal; but also I would never value Bone Meal so highly that I would not regard Superphosphate as equally or even more useful. Unfortunately, with Bone Meal in such short supply, many amateurs refuse Superphosphate in its place. Again, these organics should be applied early, well before actual planting or sowing; whereas the inorganic Superphosphate should be thinly applied at the same time as seed. There is a big argument in favour of the quick-acting Superphosphate for seed beds; you want root development to be settled very early in a plant's history—therefore a rapid and early source of phosphoric acid must surely be preferable.

A LITTLE CHEER

With many souls sore tried
With heavy hearts where sorrows deep abide
A loving duty do we owe each other,
To ease, and not depress a brother.
With family ties now sadly shattered,
With dear ones widely scattered
Across a weary, war-torn earth,
A little cheer is of such mighty worth.
A soul that has true sorrow known
Is a soul in greatness grown;
Though its scars be carefully concealed,
A wider kindness is its certain yield.
So withhold the words that bring forth fear;
To friend and neighbor give a word of cheer;
Even unto those you've never known,
Let more gentle courtesy be shown.
In memory of those who are away,
For whom with burdened heart you pray,
Do some little deed of kindness whene'er you can,
In doing so, you cheer and strengthen fellowman.

—Martha Ingersoll Robinson
Published in Northeast Corner
The San Diego Union
April 5, 1944

Favorite Tree

At a recent Floral Meeting Mr. Jerabek stated that if he could only have one tree it would be the Sweet Gum, or Liquidamber Styraciflua. Coming from a man who has planted and studied the whole gamut of trees, that should send every reader running to his nearest dealer for this beautiful specimen.

Some of you may have noticed this fine tree specimen in the Zoo and also one flaunting its bright fall colors at 8th and Pennsylvania. It is the only deciduous tree that will give to Southern California gardens the Autumn colors of the East. That is its first, but not its only qualification. Quoting from Hoyt's "Check Lists for Subtropical Regions":

"Liquidambar—ornamental trees of distinction, deciduous, symetrical, stately, with qualities in texture and coloring that will go far to offset the short, leafless period in winter. They are characterized by warty branches and deeply furrowed bark beset with corky ridges. They want a deep soil of some richness, but thrive in poorer ground if moist. While never rapid in growth, they are quite slow and stunted in dry ground. Nursery grown, at least once transplanted trees are much the easiest to establish and at time of planting should be well pruned. They stand in salt air, may be used in street plantings and are free of all pests and disease.

L. styraciflua, an erect tree, well over 100 ft. when fully grown, narrow pyramidal or columnar, the leaf a regular five-pointed star, dark green; the truly marvelous fall coloring in gold and red is the outstanding exhibit and lasts as long as six weeks, even in California; the inconspicuous flowers come very early in the year and leave many hanging, burr-like balls of winged seed."

Would that one of these could replace each of the black acacia that came down in Loma Portal last year. Or how lovely for the shade tree of a summer patio, where the sun in winter would be equally welcome. Consult your local dealer, preferably one who advertizes with us, now. This is planting time!

Mr. Hoyt adds that, for the first couple of years, it does not color up so well. A. A.

G I Haircut . . . .

(Continued from page 1)

cross and rub in the wind and a superabundance of wood generally. It may be heresy to suggest this being done in midsummer rather than deep winter, but logic and results of experience will point to just that. The time to cut is just after the main flow of sap is over, with enough of the seasons activity left to encourage healing of the raw wound. No such activity is available in winter and the cut is open to wind and weather and the spores of diseases that lodge and wait for warmth, to begin work. If pruning is done too near either end of the sapflow period, excessive bleeding will follow. Joe wouldn't be interested in any of these hairlines . . . maybe you aren't either, since the point now is to get the job done before he gets back. And it is almost beside the point here to suggest that it's so comparatively easy to guide growth when the tree is young, and such a soul scarifying job in correction when older . . . like people.

There are other corrective operations for summer that may put off the evil day and in case of some species prove to be standard practice in maintenance. The greater number of shrubs used in these regions fall into the class known as broadleaf evergreens. The mere pinching out from time to time of undesirable growth while it is still soft will go a long way toward keeping the plant in shape. It is most important, again, to have an ideal in mind as to the shape or form the subject is to take and this must be based on some knowledge of the adptation of the plant. This may not be the busy man's system, but it will save a great deal of knife work later on, if it does not obviate it altogether. Many shrubs of more or less dense, close growth should require nothing else, such as rock-rose, the ericas, Correa and myrtle. This early preventive work may be transplanted into tree culture by means of pole shears for comparable larger plants.

Whatever is done to this type of woody plant, hedge shears should be used on hedges. Only a lazy man or a chuckle-head will use them on an Arbutus or substitute shearing for pruning in case of mock orange or Duranta. Privet will take it and like it and thrive prodigiously where a Cocculus or Candollea or Photiniaeakens under the onslaught and ultimately falls prey to insects or disease, through a weakened constitution. It is strange how unthinking man can torture a plant in such a sadistic manner, at the same time upsetting all he is asking of it in way of healthy greenery, berries and bloom. And that brings up the matter of blooming in relation to pruning.

Fundamentally we prune ornamental shrubs and trees for more bloom or that of better quality and size; to guide the form or shape of the individual and to remove growth we decide is undesirable. To the average gardener the flower is by all odds the most important consideration. Then he must most certainly study the flowering habits of species. Some plants bloom very early in the spring on wood developed the previous year. Imagine how much of a flowering would result from an Acacia baileyana that had been headed in the fall or winter. All would have disappeared with the trimmings and the unthinking gardener would wait for new wood to develop the current season to support a flowering the following spring . . . if he didn't cut it off again that winter. The time to prune this plant, is right after blooming or, better, during the latter part of the blooming period; and take the cuttings inside for decoration. The same reasoning, with variations, applies to India-hawthorn, Pittosporum tobira and most of the Viburnums that are grown far south.

Some plants bloom on the current seasons wood, either fairly early in the summer or later. If you are thinking in terms of flowers and blooming you won't cut into your Hibiscus after new growth has been made in the spring. You will know that every cut will be removing potential flower buds if not the buds themselves and that it is very unlikely new wood can develop to set bloom before winter. Prune in winter or very early spring in order that normal growth may result, with strong new wood to bear abundantly the rest of the season. This is more or less true of Rose of Sharon, Oleander, Vitex or Blue Chaste Tree and Thevetia, although in the latter case enough time should elapse after cold weather to show up any winter-kill.

A critical examination at this point reveals a marked absence of fixed rules that must be strictly followed and that, it must be admitted, is true. The very nature of Nature precludes very much fixing. The basic facts are there and if the gardener will try to master only some of them, he will do a passable job of pruning . . . Joe did. Broad statements can't be narrowed too much, as witness the statement of a national authority to the effect that Jasmines should be pruned in the winter. Generally that's true, but in the case of Primrose-jasmine, the entire crop of flowers would be lost for the year on wood cut, say between November and February. Knowing the habits of the plant and sensing now that he must do a little thinking for himself, I'm sure Joe would arrange for some of his cuts about April. He wouldn't lose too much bloom and would start enough wood early, so that some canes could be tipped later for laterals to mature for a real spread of flowers the following winter-spring.

Take another group of vines that may still be grouped horticulturally under Bignonia and known as such throughout very warm regions. Note

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the differences in handling and consequent difficulty of inclusion in any but a very general ruling. Bignonia cherere is a very strong grower. Probably it should not be headed in until clearly getting out of control, then be cut back in winter, between blooming seasons, and heavily. Bignonia venusta, however, is a winter blooming species and wouldn't be pruned until through flowering. Normally, it is not such a vigorous plant and forms a comparatively scant foliage mass. This should be improved, with stronger growth resulting, by reducing yearly growth at least half, beginning the first spring after setting out. Bignonia tweedyana is definitely a spring bloomer and climbs on walls to great heights. The problem here is to keep the foliage mass and blooming within reach of the eye, as in the normal course of growth the whole surmounts strong clinging bare stems as many stories of a building as is available. The answer is to break down into a number of stems when very young and remove at least one each year to send successive growths upwards. This, then, is only three species out of a group of some twelve or fifteen, showing wide differences in treatment even within a botanical lot, closely related.

Now a few odds and ends to finish off this disjointed haggle of pruning ideas. Pines and related species, all known as conifers, will not be pruned unless absolutely necessary. Remove limbs clear back to supporting member and if the branch must be reduced, make the cut immediately above the whorl or circle of stems, always leaving some foliage. Otherwise the branch will die due to inability to break readily into sprouts. The best time is during active growth of which there are two seasons, spring and fall, and since the sap is resinous, solidifying on contact with air in a sort of coagulation, it doesn't make much difference in what period of the flow the work is done.

A group of shrubs that is becoming more important year by year, in that methods of handling are improving and more money and effort going into their culture, form terminal flower buds. I speak of Camellia and Azalea as illustrative and the subtropic gardener who is struggling with nostalgia and a moribund eastern lilac may listen in too. We are told to remove faded flowers, a few buds if too many, and possibly just a little cutting in the beginning to shape the young plant. This is all true, and safe, but leaves too much unsaid for the thinking gardener. Much discretion must be used when cutting into a flowering Camellia as the blooming for several years may be upset. However, a bush that is not thriving may well be revigorated by taking out wood in the summer. There also is a connection between pruning and nutrition that may be advantageously used. Instead of rubbing off a handful of surplus buds which is so much wasted effort on the part of the plant, a little corrective cutting might have kept a better balance between wood growth and flowering. At the same time the quality and size of blooms would be improved and a royal opportunity taken to shape up the bush. The danger is apparent and one meddles only advisedly, after consideration and thought. Probably the blasting of buds, basically, stems from this lack of balance. Nature is trying to bring it about and the brakes fail to work.

Deciduous Shrubs may be mentioned before closing, not that they carry any weight in planting this far south, but that they are found in a few specific forms here and there. Weigela and Spiraea should be pruned after flowering and since their value here lies largely in material for cutting, the two operations may be combined. Flowering Quince might well be grown a great deal more for that early spring type of cutting, but the pruning, fertilizing and irrigation are so interdependent for high success as to require separate and more exhaustive treatment than is warranted here.

Two extremes in tree structure should be mentioned. The hanging branches of a weeping tree tend ultimately to cover off and shade those below so that the latter trend to cease-function and die. The gardener may well watch this and remove, not the offending branch, but the suppressed one in order that its growth may be diverted to the stronger. This is what would happen anyway. Nature has no Deals, as such . . . new or otherwise. It's cruel survival.

Certain trees that are slender-upright like Acacia dealbata, Liquidambar or Crinodendron are best kept to the single leader. These forms are best expressed from both the artistic and practical viewpoints by the single trunk. Stems that start to compete with the main one are discouraged and held back with the knife or removed altogether. The original and natural concept of the tree is retained and a dangerous V crotch prevented that may save a half-wreck in the wind. Always, too, in pruning any young tree, retain all lower branches or feather as long as feasible, merely discouraging or tipping back to forestall competition with the selected main stem. This builds up a stronger trunk than would otherwise result. Do you remember that young apple tree that came fresh from the nursery, bare-root, thick and knotty-stemmed? Well, the nurseryman left all the lower side branches on in the field until nearly time to dig. They built up a thicker stem as calipered

(Continued on page 8)

Kate Sessions Column

"When asked to particularize the things she had introduced to San Diego, Miss Sessions mentioned right off, Bougainvillea Lateoritis, the red kind that is effective in the Park Plaza. In default of success at propagating this from cuttings, she evolved the method of layering, by building up a trellis to support boxes in which the shoots were layered. Lots of folks will remember wondering why those boxes were hung up in her big creeper. She also made the Cocos Plumosa Palm popular and has brought in a large number of heathers. Statice, before the days of our Everlasting fields at Pacific Beach were a main interest, and she discovered the best seedling of Rommeya Coulteri or Matilija Poppy and developed a technique for its successful propagation.

Miss Sessions confesses to a weakness for vines. She found and captured the evergreen grapes (cissus rhombifolia) that adorn so many porches and pergolas."
—From California Garden, June, 1922

Winter Color

The wise gardener, who has plenty of winter color is now enjoying camellias, azaleas and begonias. The hairy type of fibrous begonias is now just dripping with large clusters of pink and white bloom; that tall holly-leaf wonder, called Templini, or its plainer sister, Jessie, is tufted with pink bouquets as is the beautiful red-leafed, Mrs. Wallow, while Chiala has panicles of waxy white blossoms against its rich dark leaves.

Streptosolen Jamesonii is a fine winter-blooming shrub. Try its handsome sprays of golden flowers against the base of a wall covered with orange bignonia venusta.

Don't forget to cut hydrangeas back heavily in January. Dig up old plants of shasta daisies. Dismember, discarding everything connected with the old root. Use fine young uprooted cuttings for new beds. Daisies revel in brightest sunshine. Barnyard fertilizer with plenty of water after the young plants are established. Irrigate by flooding during blooming; never sprinkle the blooms.

G I Haircut . . . .

(Continued from page 7)

and the larger the caliper, the more money he got. The knots on what might otherwise have been a smooth stem were the healing wounds of the recent cuts.

One more thought that takes us back to the beginning. When that burley individual under your window begins to show its true malingering, it's "word of promise to the ear, broken to the hope," try a little root-pruning. Take a spade to the root area immediately around the crown of the plant or near the trunk, if its actually a tree form. In proportion to the number and heft of the roots severed, so will the growth of the top be reduced and to that extent controlled without the usual butchery and distortion. This, of course, is merely putting off the day when the problem must be really solved. And yet with other values, root pruning is a trick to bring a recalcitrant plant into flowering . . . but that's too long a story to tack on here.

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